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SEMITIC ACTION GROUP CRITICIZES BEN-GURION,  
FORMULATES OWN PROGRAM

- ISRAEL -

by Natan Yellin-Mor

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FOREWORD

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[Following is a translation of two articles from the Hebrew-language periodical Etgar, Tel Aviv, April 1960.]

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# I. LEADER OF SEMITIC ACTION ATTACKS ISRAELI GOVERNMENT POLICY

Pages 7-10

Natan Yellin-Mor

- \* David Ben-Gurion's trip follows the collapse of Israel's political prestige in America, Europe and Asia.
- \* Will TSAHAL'S [Tsva haganah leYisrael - Israel Defense Forces] new armament change the situation?
- \* Israel's security hinges first and foremost on a new political orientation.

At the beginning of his last government tenure, Mr. Ben-Gurion isolated himself from the din of daily events in order to survey anew the security problems of the state. It may be assumed that no one disturbed him. He was enabled to weigh matters and to examine them anew in the light of facts which are in the public domain and in the light of secret information which are exclusively his property and that of the handful of people in his confidence.

This was a good occasion, perhaps the last one, for this man - who holds in his hands the most vital matters of the state, matters pertaining to foreign relations and to security - to question his own beliefs and opinions held during the last twelve years and to compare them with the results achieved. If he had done this, then perhaps there would have been a chance for a fundamental change in the path followed by this country, and for shifting to a new way, strong and straight.

But question marks of this sort require a profound soul-searching, devoid of illusions of the searcher about himself. They require the proposition that "perhaps I have erred, perhaps the path followed hitherto was suitable to circumstances of the hour but is no longer suited to changed conditions."

It appears that Mr. Ben-Gurion is not capable of this in terms of his personality. Of course, he more than once changed his opinions and his tactics. But every time he did so he sought to prove that never did he think otherwise than in the manner he thought at that particular moment - the manner acceptable at that particular time. These things are not being said as a personal rebuke. That is why we shall not bring examples which anyone will recall about statements by Mr. Ben-Gurion on the subject of "how we achieved [the establishment of] the state."

Perhaps age is a factor. It is not easy for a man who became old while at the head of the government to wrest himself away from the easy customary thoughts and to cast doubt about all that was accepted, only yesterday, as permanently established truth.

From various sources we learned that the Prime Minister read off his survey before his fellow ministers for over two hours. He informed them of the changes which recently occurred in the situation, and he reached his conclusion:

TSAHAL requires new armament, in order that the shattered balance of forces in the region may be restored.

### A Shattered Political Structure

Indeed, something was shattered in the last months, and it was not precisely the military balance of power. What crumbled was the political edifice erected over three years ago by the Sinai camp which was set up by MAPAI [Mifleget Poalei Erets Yisrael - Israel Labor Party] and which included all Israeli parties: Herut [Freedom] as well as Ahdut Ha-avodah [Labor Unity] participated in it knowingly and with premeditation, and even MAPAM [Mifleget Poalim MevHedet - United Workers' Party] allowed itself to be dragged in after the fact.

The political structure was based on the economic resources of the United States in the region, and on the belief that friendly neutrality on the part of the United States could be obtained by activities which would seem to save the Middle East from the clutches of Soviet agents. France supplied skeletal military aid - France, whose sons are shedding their blood in ever-increasing numbers on the battlefields of Algeria. And the green pastures round-about, the beauty of which exceeded their utility, were several young states in Africa and Asia. The scenery caught the eye and distracted from the distress and from the dangers lurking nearby.

Already in the days of the Sinai operation it became clear that the base calculation was erroneous. The United States did not remain neutral. It set itself up with all its might against Israel and its allies in the Suez campaign and ordered them to retreat. Great Britain and France were unable to disobey her command. Israel too did as she was told, though at a slow pace, in order to insure for herself some material prize in return for submitting to the will of the angered master of the White House.

It was then that love for friends - that sister-in-arms in the struggle against the common enemy - became passionate. Declarations reverberated from the eastern to the western Mediterranean. Then too occurred the stroke of genius of a league of Mediterranean people, based on an imaginary assumption that the Mediterranean had only a northern - European - shore (a shore entirely French and Israeli) and on complete ignorance of the southern shore of the Mediterranean and its inhabitants. "Eternal friendship" and "security pact" were valuable and profitable concepts on the Israeli political mart. The Israeli

citizen who yearns so for the security of existence of his country - born as it was after so long a period of hope and such heavy sacrifice of lives - drank deeply of the slogans. He began to believe in his future. He began to look upon speedy French aircraft and easily-maneuvered French tanks as hard currency, no less hard than the American dollar.

Of course, relations with Ghana and with Liberia in Africa and with Burma in Asia were friendly, and caused a flow of distinguished visitors from here to there and from there to here, and encouraged the formation of joint economic companies and the execution of construction projects and the sending of experts in the military affairs and in public administration.

For the moment it appeared that indeed the ship of state had reached safe waters.

#### A French Conclusion to an Israeli Hypothesis

Suddenly the feeling of security disappeared. It was replaced with a different feeling as a result of facts of hard reality: a dark feeling of insecurity, of distress in the heart.

The experts expressed themselves first about that part of the balance sheet which had looked strongest: France. Madness engulfed that country and threatened to plunge it into an internal war. De Gaulle was called to power as a savior, as a divine emissary. Those who called out to him believed that he would bring the French army to final victory over the army of struggling Algeria. And those that feared him, that submitted to him, saw him as the only leader who could save the nation from civil war. Quickly it became apparent that the faith was not justified and that the fears were exaggerated.

Indeed President De Gaulle likes to feed the petty bourgeois in France on slogans of glory, honor and grandor. But when he leaves the stage and passes to the area of reality, he weighs his steps on the scales of Gallic realism, on sensitive and accurate scales. It was not difficult for De Gaulle quickly to understand that there was no possibility of carrying out a thoroughgoing program of rehabilitation for the Republic as long as the Algerian war was in progress. And that there was no prospect for French victory in that country, since the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants decided to fight for its national independence. His conclusion disappointed those who raised him to power on their shields. He turned to the fighting opponent with the suggestion to sit down at the bargaining table and he brought up the possibility of self-determination for the Algerians.

Doubtlessly there were many reasons which prompted De Gaulle to be careful in his pronouncements. He hesitated to force down his supporters' throats a bitter pill all at once.

His caution was not successful. His supporters of yesterday proclaimed him a traitor and rose against him. Only with difficulty did he subdue them. He was also concerned about a loss of prestige if he were to hold out his hand to the true representatives of the fighting Algerian nation. These hesitations cost the French people additional thousands of sacrifices as the war continued. And no one knows and understands as well as De Gaulle, that the leaders of the Algerian revolt will never agree that collaborationists should speak on their behalf and on behalf of their nation - much as he, De Gaulle himself, never agreed that one Darlan should represent fighting France.

That is why De Gaulle is forced to take an additional step, a clearer and more decisive step. He is forced to invite the true representatives of Algeria, to sit down with them at a table to discuss with them in detail the evacuation of the country by French forces and the grant of unconditional independence to the Algerian people.

In the meantime his government is preparing the setting. It searches for ways to renew ties with the Arab countries, to express good will and a willingness to forget the Suez episode.

On this point the Gaullist Foreign Ministry uses the Israeli theory, but uses it against Israel. Indeed the representatives of Israel, official and nonofficial, explained to France very clearly: Israel and the Arabs are the two opposite poles of the Middle Eastern sphere. He who disputes with Arabs must ipso facto rely on Israel. If Israel will "keep Egypt busy", the pressure upon France in Algeria will be relieved. And in order "to keep Egypt busy", all we need is superior armament for TSAHAL, and perhaps some air cover in time of need.

Apparently France considers this theory basically sound even today. But her desire to put an end to the Algerian war induces her to reach a conclusion contrary to that which Israel wished for. That is why one still hears declarations of amity and friendship on the part of statesmen, while in reality another quite different purpose has emerged.

#### On Land and in the Air

The first traffic accident occurred on land. Renault, the national public automobile company, cancelled a contract for assembly by an Israeli concern. The only cause which could have led to this cancellation of a contract was none other than the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Not only that, but coinciding with the voiding of the contract with Israel, news reports were circulated about plans to erect in Egypt an assembly plant for Renault cars.

The Israeli press was indeed furious. For years they had been laying it on thick about the selfless, pure and guileless friendship existing between France and Israel. Israel the beloved accepted the slap in the face and broke into tears, but immediately she recovered from the pain and the shame. Then the second accident happened - in the air. Air France, the French airline company, suddenly cancelled an agreement it had initialed with the Israeli company El Al for close cooperation between the two. Doubtlessly, this too was done with the express wish of the French Foreign Ministry.

These two accidents in so short a period shook the sense of security of the Israeli citizen. The press again expressed its disappointment. But it appeared that the French Foreign Ministry enjoyed these expressions. They serve the Ministry, in conversations with the representatives of Arab states, as proof that indeed France has kicked its Israeli beloved, and that France is now ready to betroth another; to betroth another who will perhaps not be so good-looking and righteous, but who will have a richer dowry.

#### The Black Continent and the Mushroom Cloud

The third accident happened on the sea.

Without prior preparation the public was told that the Israeli shipping line Zim was forced to sell her shares of the partnership with Ghana in the Black Star shipping line. However, we were assured, the management of the company would remain in the future in Zim's hands. But who would believe that this will continue for a long time!

Even this accident is the symptom of the beginning of a process. It is symptomatic of a change in relation which stems from the recognition that the paths of Israel and of the African states do not run parallel, but that at one point they break apart and that from there they lead in different directions, more and more removed from each other. Indeed it is not possible to convince the Africans that we are friends of people fighting for their freedom, at a time when we vote in the United Nations against the Algerian nation which is actively fighting for its freedom. Nor can they be convinced that from a scientific point they are not faced with danger from the pollution of the air through the French atomic tests on African soil; they believe that there is danger as the explosion occurs among them. They are unable to comprehend how a state that swears it is a friend votes against them along with France, especially about a matter which, they believe, affects their bodies, their health, and their physical existence.



(Parenthetically: How far this irresponsible policy can lead - and not only with respect to relations with the peoples of Africa - became apparent to us after the French atomic explosion. Those conducting the experiment hoped for weather conditions with a south-westerly wind, which would carry the radioactive dust across the countries of the central and eastern Mediterranean. The state of Israel was among these countries. Only the activities of the Qol Israel [Voice of Israel] radio, which calmed anxieties by disseminating untrustworthy opinions, prevented an outbreak of public panic. It is nearly certain that the French government would have carried out the test even in the face of Israeli opposition. But Israeli agreement placed Israel in the position of a partner in crime in the eyes of the people of Africa, and of an accomplice bearing responsibility in the eyes of every thinking person in the country, of every person concerned with the emotional and physical health of his people.)

That is why the anti-Israel outbursts in the Ghana parliament, incited by Egypt and by certain circles in Great Britain, are understandable. The fact that they were based on trifles shows that the background existed, and it is the policy of the Israeli government which is to blame for this.

The trip of the Foreign Minister to the countries of Africa was intended to give some encouragement to the friendship, which had begun to fade and turn to hatred. Her [Mrs. Meir's, the Foreign Minister] public declarations upon her return to Israel were encouraging and attempted to relieve the public's anxiety. But in secret talks she must have - unless she wished to delude herself - revealed the truth and to admit that the question about the "Jewish Shylock" was not the only manifestation of unfriendly attitudes towards Israel during her trip. Indeed Israel is increasingly pictured by public opinion in the African countries as a hypocritical creature, whose heart and whose mouth are not in accord with each other, and between whose words and whose deeds there exists an enormous gap; a creature desiring reward for statements which are not backed up.

#### The "Treason" of the United States

Official Israeli policy defines the change in America's position as a tragic result of cancer, that malignant disease which defeated Foster Dulles the Righteous [Tsadiq], who alone understood the Israel argument about the danger of Nasser, communism's agent.

Now the explanation is that Dulles died, and his policy died with him.

But even Eisenhower has some comprehension about the vital affairs of the United States. And to him it appears that hunger and unemployment, that poverty and ignorance are more dangerous agents of communism than is Nasser, who throws communists in jail. Eisenhower and his aides are convinced, that prison walls will not be able to hold back the tempest of despair of many millions of hunger weakened persons. And they decided to do something, to ease the suffering of these millions through the granting of loans and the allocation of surplus agricultural products.

Israel's statesmen argued: The United States errs in giving economic aid to Egypt without obtaining in return guarantees concerning the passage of Israeli ships through the Suez [Canal]. We warn the government of the United States.

The government of the United States did not heed the warning. But once again Israel appeared before public opinion as a factor devoid of human sensitivities, prepared to progress towards its objectives over the bodies of the victims of hunger. The donations of official Israeli institutions for the victims of the disaster in the French town of Farges [Farges?] did not erase this impression; they increased it. Even this act was not done without calculations of political profit. Human feeling has ceased to be a decisive factor and has been pressed into the service of commercial advantages.

Why should we then complain about others who use the same yardstick, and who have far greater resources at their disposal to express their feeling and to purchase in exchange something of value to them?!

He who is not capable of evaluating objectively an examination of reality will certainly not ask himself such a question. For such a person it is clear as the sun that we should be permitted to do things forbidden to others. That is why the disappointment in the new policy of the United States is so great. We still receive from there some tens of millions of dollars in cash and in counterpart funds. That is why we may not express our bitterness too vocally. But in half-loud tones it is being said that the American administration has swerved from the path of friendship of Mr. Dulles and has betrayed Israel.

#### To Pave a New Way

And if they all betray us, then obviously there is no other recourse but to live by the sword. Then the weapon becomes the sole and only friend in which we can put our trust.

A depressing future would be in store for us if this were really true. For weapons are bought at high prices, high in money and high in political price. The monetary outlays weaken our material resources. As for the political price, there is no telling whereto it may lead us.

We are not preaching a one-sided dismantling of the armaments that protects our lives. We are not proposing a weakening of our defense effort which is something needed and not to be condemned. Rather, we seek to change the course of the state to one which will make the arms race unnecessary.

Experience shows without any doubt that we cannot derive any advantage from placing our state in the corner opposite that of all the other people in the region. Such a policy leads to accidents, one of which may turn out to be fatal. We are interested in the relief of the neighboring people, in the raising of their standard of living, no less than we are interested in the improvement of the Hebrew nation. The interests of all the countries of the region are identical in their basic traits, except for the hatred and the distress, which will fade away. To stress only that which is passing and to ignore that which will be in the future a firm base is worse than sin - it is foolishness. It would mean eternal enslavement to the needs of the moment.

The time has come to try a new way, a way which does not pass through Paris, London and Washington. It is a way that is shorter but broad, straight, and secure.

## II. OUTLINE OF BOOKLET DESCRIBING SEMITIC ACTION PROGRAM

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Unsigned Article

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5. CULTURAL RENAISSANCE: The Zionist myth. - Cultural oppression. - Liberation of creative forces. - Humanism. - Culture of the past. - All-Israeli Education: The operation of unitary education. - Curriculum. - History of Palestine. - Language of the country. - Religious education.

6. ELIMINATION OF ECONOMIC DEPRESSION: A depressed economy. - Consumption instead of production. - Permanent quality. - Subservience of production. - Removing from independence. - An economy apart. - False security. - False absorption [of immigrants]. Dividing the Booty: The war for booty. - Capitalism and socialism mislead. - Quality of the parties. - Instruments of distribution. - The three social classes. The Breakdown of the Regime: National danger. - The beginnings of destruction. - Elimination of the depression regime.

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